

## CLAIMS

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for distributing software programs comprising:

transmitting a plurality of software programs from a networked server

5 computer to a remote software dispensing device;

storing said plurality of software programs on said software dispensing device;

in response to a user request, displaying a directory of said plurality of software programs on said software dispensing device;

10 in response to a software selection by a user, accepting payment from said user for a selected software program; and

in response to said payment, communicating an instantiation of said selected software program from said software dispensing device to a portable computer system of said user.

2. A method as described in Claim 1 further comprising:

in response to said software selection, emulating, on said software dispensing device, a portable computer system executing said selected software program.

3. A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said software

dispensing device is a computer system comprising: a processor coupled to a bus; a memory coupled to said bus; a display screen coupled to said bus; and a

communication unit coupled to said bus and for communicating with a portable computer system of said user.

4. A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said directory  
5 comprises a name, description and price for each of said plurality of software programs.

5. A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said transferring is performed wirelessly.

6. A method as described in Claim 5 wherein said transferring is performed using Bluetooth communication.

7. A method as described in Claim 5 wherein said transferring is performed using infrared communication.

8. A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said portable computer system of said user is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

20 9. A method as described in Claim 1 further comprising backing up information from said portable computer system of said user onto said software dispensing device.

10. A method as described in Claim 9 further comprising restoring said information from said software dispensing device onto a replacement portable computer system of said user.

5 11. A method as described in Claim 1 further comprising archiving inactive software programs from said portable computer system of said user onto said software dispensing device.

12. A method for distributing software programs comprising:  
transmitting a plurality of software programs from a networked server computer to a remote software dispensing kiosk;  
storing said plurality of software programs on said software dispensing kiosk;  
in response to a user request, displaying a directory of said plurality of software programs on said software dispensing kiosk;  
in response to a software selection by a user, accepting payment from said user for a selected software program; and  
in response to said payment, transferring an instantiation of said selected software program to a hand held computer system of said user.

20 13. A method as described in Claim 12 further comprising:

in response to said software selection, emulating, on said software dispensing kiosk, a hand held computer system executing said selected software program.

5           14.     A method as described in Claim 12 wherein said software dispensing kiosk is a computer system comprising: a processor coupled to a bus; a memory coupled to said bus; a display screen coupled to said bus; and a communication unit coupled to said bus and for communicating with said hand held computer system of said user.

10           15.     A method as described in Claim 12 wherein said directory comprises a name, description and price for each of said plurality of software programs.

15           16.     A method as described in Claim 12 wherein said transferring is performed wirelessly.

          17.     A method as described in Claim 16 wherein said transferring is performed using Bluetooth communication.

20           18.     A method as described in Claim 16 wherein said transferring is performed using infrared communication.

19. A method as described in Claim 12 wherein said hand held computer system of said user is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

20. A method as described in Claim 12 further comprising backing up information from said hand held computer system of said user onto said software dispensing kiosk.

21. A method as described in Claim 20 further comprising restoring said information from said software dispensing kiosk onto a replacement hand held computer system of said user.

22. A method as described in Claim 12 further comprising archiving inactive software programs from said hand held computer system of said user onto said software dispensing kiosk.

23. A network system for distributing software programs comprising:  
a networked server for receiving and storing software programs from software developers;

a remotely located software dispensing kiosk networked with said server and for receiving and storing software programs from said networked server;

in response to a user request, said software dispensing kiosk for displaying a directory of said software programs;

in response to a software selection by a user, said software dispensing kiosk also for accepting payment from said user for a selected software program; and

in response to said payment, said software dispensing kiosk for communicating an instantiation of said selected software program to a portable computer system of said user.

24. A network system as described in Claim 23 wherein, in response to said software selection, said software dispensing kiosk also for emulating a portable computer system executing said selected software program.

25. A network system as described in Claim 23 wherein said software dispensing kiosk comprises: a processor coupled to a bus; a memory coupled to said bus; a display screen coupled to said bus; and a communication unit coupled to said bus and for communicating with said portable computer system of said user.

26. A network system as described in Claim 23 wherein said directory comprises a name, description and price for each of said software programs offered by said software dispensing kiosk.

27. A network system as described in Claim 23 wherein said portable computer system of said user is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

